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# STATE OF IOWA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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**EMBARGOED UNTIL 3 p.m. Aug. 6**

## **STATE INVESTMENT IN EARLY LITERACY INTERVENTION SHOWING RESULTS** ***Test scores, graduation rates and average daily attendance rates included in*** ***new federal report from Iowa Department of Education***

(DES MOINES, IOWA) – Iowa continues to see sustained, modest gains in the overall number of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students who are showing higher proficiency in reading and math, but 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders show some lag and achievement gaps still persist among minority groups, according to preliminary results in a new annual report from the Iowa Department of Education.

Iowa officials released the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITBS/ITED) proficiency scores this week as part of a new reporting requirement created by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Graduation rates and average daily attendance rates also are included in the preliminary report. The complete report, including a list of Schools in Need of Assistance (SINA), is scheduled for release in mid-August.

"We are encouraged to see we are sustaining our responsibility to educate our children with improvements in both reading and math scores, particularly in the K-3 grades where we have focused interventions in the last several years," said Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack. "More students are reaching higher achievement levels – and that achievement translates into a brighter future filled with opportunity for them and for Iowa."

Ted Stilwill, director of the Iowa Department of Education, said he is encouraging educators to use these successes as a catalyst to narrow achievement gaps in all grades, and to improve overall achievement at the middle and high school levels.

"We know that the schools that have implemented early intervention programs have shown positive results for all students, including minority groups," Stilwill said. "These and other interventions are available to all schools. The state Department of Education and Area Education Agencies are cooperating to expand the technical and instructional assistance offered to schools so they can reach out to more teachers and students."

"With our current budget challenges, we must set and maintain strict spending priorities," Vilsack said. "It's clear that our priority investment in early intervention programs is money well spent. We must maintain those investments now and into the future – and, where possible, expand them to include more programs and more students, so we can build on these successes."

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## Highlights

The achievement results compare the 2001-03 biennium versus the 2000-02 biennium. Highlights of the summary results show:

### Reading Proficiency

- 70.4% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders are proficient, compared to 69% previously. This is the third year of increase, which followed eight years of decline.
- 69.3% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders are proficient, essentially unchanged from last year's 69.4%.
- 77.0% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders are proficient, essentially unchanged from last year's 77.1%.
- Reading achievement gaps are most significant for racial/ethnic minorities (excluding Asians); students in poverty; students with disabilities; English Language Learners; and migrant students.

### Math Proficiency

- 75.0% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders are proficient, compared to 72.4% previously. This is the third year of increase, which followed a nine-year gradual decline.
- 73.6% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders are proficient, a slight improvement over last year's score of 73.1%.
- 82.5% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders are proficient, compared to 81.3%. This is the second year of increase following four years of decline.
- Math achievement gaps are most significant for racial/ethnic minorities (excluding Asians); students in poverty; students with disabilities; English Language Learners; and migrant students.

### Graduation Rates

- Statewide graduation rates have increased steadily each year and are at nearly 90% for the 2001-02 school year.

### Average Daily Attendance

- Iowa's average daily attendance for grades kindergarten through eighth grade have been fairly consistent over the years. The average daily attendance for the 2001-02 school year was 95.8%.

As part of Iowa's NCLB accountability plan, test scores, graduation rates and average daily attendance are considered to be among the key indicators of student success, and will be reported each August. Every state issues a similar report, and each uses test score data to develop their lists of Schools in Need of Assistance, also an NCLB requirement.

Within about 10 days, Iowa's complete NCLB annual report will be available on the Iowa Department of Education website at [www.state.ia.us/educate](http://www.state.ia.us/educate). The department's annual Condition of Education Report, which is a more comprehensive report including demographic, teacher and financial data, will continue to be published and is scheduled to be released in November.

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